What in the Devil??

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/18016073.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, Alana Bloom
Additional Tags:	domestic abuse, not between Will/Hannibal, Alana is worried, Misunderstandings, ofc is a garbage person, new mystery man, hmm if he's gonna talk about hawks, i wonder who it could possibly be?, Hannibal Loves Will, and is even willing to make sacrifices for him, Hannibal likes Will's dogs, Will also likes Will's dogs, obviously, Hannibal is definitely a love struck fool, Pining, Will is a bit of an idiot sometimes, but we love him anyways, and so does Hannibal, at this point I think Will just likes being dramatic, Can't blame him though, I also love being dramatic, not that this is about me
Language:	English
Series:	Part 11 of The Devil Wants His Due
Stats:	Published: 2019-03-06 Words: 4,362 Chapters: 1/1

What in the Devil??

by SingingInTheRaiin

Summary

Whoever sent Randall Tier to kill Will isn't satisfied with how that episode ended, and is determined to bring things to a close once and for all. Alana sticks her nose in where it doesn't belong- purely out of concern for her friend- and Will comes to several realizations about himself, and his relationship with Hannibal.

Notes

Oh geez I really better start wrapping this story up soon if I don't want to run out of devil titles! I'm thinking that the next chapter might be on the longer side and be the end, but I guess it really depends on how much the characters are willing to actually do what I need them to do xD

Carmen was certainly not having a very good day. First, she was woken up in the middle of the night to her son screaming bloody murder, only to find out he'd simply dropped his favorite toy outside of his crib, and apparently just could not continue living his life without the stupid thing. Then she hadn't been able to get back to sleep because her wife was always so noisy when returning home from her late night shifts at the ER.

Her wife just kept going on and on about all the stupid shit she'd seen during her shift, and Carmen couldn't care less about any of it. It was nights like these where she was reminded of the fact that she'd only married Eliza for the money, not expecting her wife to suddenly cut herself off from her family to prove that she could 'make it on her own'. It was complete bullshit.

But what really took Carmen by surprise was as she was stepping outside for a cigarette, having finally managed to get Eliza to just stop talking already, there was a man standing there, looking entirely unbothered by the cold. She narrowed her eyes and pulled her jacket tighter around herself. "Hey, who the hell are you, and what are you doing on my lawn?"

The man glanced around at the iced over grass, which was all clearly shriveled and brown. "I wouldn't exactly call this a lawn. As for why I'm here, it's because you seem like a possible target."

Carmen slipped her hand into her pocket to grab her lighter. She was prepared to take this guy down. Sure, he was tall, but he was also on the thin side, and looked stupid enough to underestimate someone like Carmen. "Target for what?" If she could keep his distracted, then he wouldn't notice her pulling out the only weapon that she had on her at the moment.

The man grinned. "You're a terrible human being. I mean, I know that there are others out there that are worse, but there's something particularly insidious about your brand of evil. And I think that Graham, being the sucker for a bleeding heart that he is, will be wanting to take you down soon. But of course that holier-than-thou bullshit he sprouts means that he won't want to dirty his hands himself. He'll send Hannibal, and when Hannibal sees that I'm a hawk just like he is, he'll realize that he's been fixating on the wrong man all along. I already tried to get rid of the nuisance, but unfortunately, it didn't take, so I'll have to settle for plan B, which is you. First, though, I just need to give you a bit of a push."

He stalked towards Carmen, and she bit back the scream that wanted to escape her. This wasn't the kind of neighborhood where anyone could think it strange to hear a lady screaming in distress, and no one would bother to do anything to help her. As soon as he was within range, Carmen whipped out her lighter and clicked it on, waving it in the stranger's face.

He didn't even flinch, though the smell of singed flesh made it obvious that he had been hurt by the attack. Then he reached out to grab Carmen's wrist in a grip that was tight enough that it forced her to drop her weapon, and she watched with wide eyes as the burn across his face seemed to just disappear, and a few seconds later, he looked as healthy and in one piece as he had before. This time Carmen did scream, despite knowing how futile it was, calling out for her wife. If the bitch was to be good for anything, she could at least try and defend Carmen

from danger. She tried to swing her free hand towards him to punch him, but he easily caught her hand before it could make contact, and he gave her an eerie smile. “I will feel absolutely no guilt for what I’m going to do to you.”

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Will shuffled through the papers on his desk, hoping that if he looked at them for long enough it would get him in the mood for grading them, even if his mind was far away from his classroom. He looked up in surprise when he heard a light knock against the door of his office, and saw Alana standing in the doorway.

It had been a while since they’d last seen each other. Things had been a bit awkward since the kiss, which felt like it had happened about a million years ago at this point. He gave her a friendly smile, and hoped that their friendship wasn’t ruined beyond repair. “Alana, come in, come in.”

She returned the smile as she stepped into the small office, and then only hesitated for a moment before sitting down in the chair in front of the desk. “Will. I owe you an apology. Ghosting you because you don’t return my feelings was wrong of me. I wish that was the only reason I came here, though.” Will furrowed his eyebrows, and stared at Alana curiously. “I’ve heard some… interesting rumors,” she said slowly, like she didn’t even want to get the words out. “I know that it probably seems nosey for me to bring this up at all, but I’ve heard that you and Hannibal Lecter have entered into a relationship.”

Will didn’t bother to deny it. Jack already knew, and since Alana already knew about Jack’s plans to bring Hannibal down, he didn’t think it would be that big a deal if Alana was under the same impression that Jack was, which was that Will was sleeping with Hannibal to somehow catch him as being a serial killer. But that didn’t mean he wasn’t going to address another issue. “Where did you hear that?”

It was as good as a confession when talking to someone like Alana, and they both knew it. She frowned, and reached up to cross her arms over her chest. “Will, for you and Hannibal to be seeing each other is highly inappropriate. There’s a huge imbalance of power, seeing as how he’s responsible for keeping you mentally stable. And that’s not even mentioning the fact that your boss suspects he’s-” Alana cut herself off before she could enter a full on rant mode. A look of dawning realization and horror crossed her face. “Did Jack tell you to-?”

Will shook his head. “It just kind of happened. Jack thinks he can take advantage of the situation, and I’m not going to go out of my way to stop him.”

Alana didn’t stop frowning. “Will, even if you’re not technically seeing Hannibal in an official capacity, he’s still your psychiatrist. You can’t date him. Maybe there’s real, honest feelings between the two of you, but that’s irrelevant. Up until now, Hannibal’s been the only therapist able to actually get through to you, and we both know that you need that a lot more than you need a lover.”

It was hard to argue with her. He didn’t think it would go over well to say that ever since coming back to life the first time, he’d found it much easier to deal with his own mind. He doubted she’d believe it even if he did feel like confiding in her, which he definitely didn’t.

“It’s not like there’s some huge emotional bond between us,” Will told her, while resisting the urge to fidget his hands together, and trace his fingers around the ring that Alana wouldn’t be able to see. “And Hannibal’s professional enough that our sessions aren’t stunted by our extracurricular activities.”

For some reason, that didn’t seem to convince Alana at all, and she only looked more tense than she had at the beginning of the conversation. “Will. I know that you don’t always take the greatest care of your own well-being, which means that sometimes you do things that aren’t great for you without even realizing it. This is one of those times. As your friend-”

Will leaned forward, though he didn’t make any move to stand up or go closer to Alana. “We are friends, but I’m also an adult, and I’d really appreciate it if you could trust me to know what I’m doing.” It was a difficult thing to ask of her, especially considering the fact that he really didn’t have any idea of what he was doing. “And you never answered my question. Who told you about Hannibal and me?”

Alana sighed, and something on Will’s face must have made it clear that she wasn’t going to be able to get through to him. She was stubborn, and she definitely wasn’t going to just leave the matter be. But for now, Will was more stubborn than her, which meant she’d at least stop bothering him for the moment. “Jack let something slip, though I don’t think he meant to.” She stood up, and then reached over to lightly rest her hand on top of Will’s. “We are still friends,” she reminded him earnestly. “Which means that you can talk to me about anything.”

Will smiled, and turned his hand over so that he could give hers a light squeeze. “I know. Thank you, Alana. You’re a good friend.”

She didn’t look very sure of that, but she nodded anyways. “We should have lunch together one of these days. The only way to get things back to normal between us is if we spend more time together and remember what normal is.” Then she kissed the top of Will’s head before turning and leaving his office.

He waited until he could no longer hear the faint clicking of her heels against the floor, and then he fished his phone out to dial a number that really shouldn’t feel like muscle memory to punch in. “Alana Bloom seems to be on the warpath. I wouldn’t be surprised if you hear from her soon.”

Hannibal only sounded amused when he responded. “And what would I be hearing about from her, exactly?”

Will rolled his eyes. “Apparently Jack has loose lips, and Alana thinks that our relationship is inappropriate. She’s really not wrong, you know. Though not necessarily for the reasons she’s cited. Anyways, I just thought that I would warn you.”

“Thank you, Will. Though I am quite confident in my ability to deal with Alana Bloom, I appreciate the sentiment in warning me.” His voice sounded far too warm, and it made Will want to roll his eyes again, even though he knew that obviously Hannibal wouldn’t be able to see his reaction.

He shrugged. “Yeah, yeah, whatever. I just thought that it would be easier for both of us if you can figure out a way to call her off. Without doing anything harmful to her, obviously.”

“Obviously,” Hannibal agreed, as if he wasn’t always a breath away from slaughtering another innocent person. Though he sounded pretty honest at the moment, and Will wondered what had him suddenly wanting to act so good.

It was rather suspicious, to say the least. And how sad was it that Will had to think someone wanting to be a good person was suspicious? “I have to get back to grading these papers.”

He was about to hang up, but Hannibal hurried to get in some more words. “Come over for dinner tonight?”

Will did a quick mental inventory of the state of his house. He’d fed and watered and walked the dogs this morning, but he really didn’t want to leave them alone for the whole night. With how much time he’d spent at Hannibal’s lately, he could only hope that his pack wasn’t feeling abandoned. “Sorry, I have plans.”

Instead of sounding upset or jealous, Hannibal sounded like he was smiling. “Then shall I take dinner to your place instead?”

Yeah, Alana was definitely right about their relationship being inappropriate, though at this point, Will supposed that he was in too deep to back out now. He was already stuck with a permanent ring, which would be pretty awkward if he broke up with Hannibal. Not that Will expected to be with the devil forever. One of them was bound to get bored of the other sooner or later. But for now, Will could enjoy the company, and the well made food. “Sure, as long as you bring enough to have some scraps for the dogs.”

“I’m sure I can arrange for that. I will see you tonight, then.” It wasn’t a question, just a statement of fact.

Will felt like he needed to respond anyways. “Yup. See you tonight. Try not to get too fancy on me, though. I’ve had a long day.” Then he hung up abruptly before Hannibal could get the chance to say anything else.

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As Will drove back to Wolf Trap, he listened to the radio. There was a story about a dog that climbed a tree to rescue a stuck cat, a story about a mailman who skidded on the road and caused a four car pile up, and then a story about a woman suspected of murder. That one caught Will’s interest, and he turned the radio volume up.

According to the reporter, the woman’s wife had died after falling down the stairs, but had several bruises that could not be attributed to the fall. On top of that, the hospital the dead wife worked at claimed that she had a history of injuries in line with those seen in domestic abuse cases. The suspect had originally told police that her wife tripped and fell down the stairs on one of their son’s toys, but later changed her story to say that an intruder had broken in and pushed the wife. There was a brief audio recording of the suspect saying that domestic abuse only happened in heterosexual couples, and that anyone accusing her of anything was

just homophobic. The reporter then added that the suspect's son was originally a foster child that the deceased wife had met at work, and that the suspect wanted to put him back into the system because, "I'm only human, and I cannot raise a baby without any help. It saddens me greatly to say goodbye to him, but what other choice do I have?"

Will narrowed his eyes, and his grip on the steering wheel tightened until his knuckles were white. Of course he found great displeasure with any criminal that hurt innocent people, but rapists, anyone who hurt children, and domestic abusers were near the top of his list of terrible people that the world was better off without. Normally he would do more research into Hannibal's potential victims, but in this case, just listening to her voice set off his instincts. He listened to the rest of the story to get the woman's name, and then turned the radio off for the rest of the drive home.

When he finally got there, he could immediately see that he'd beaten Hannibal, and grinned to himself as he got out and headed inside. His dogs all let out a chorus of barked greetings, and Will made sure to spend time giving all of them a fair amount of pets and praise. Then he extracted himself from the doggy pile to make his way to the kitchen.

He decided to take just a couple of minutes to make sure that things were mostly all cleaned and put away, because he didn't need Hannibal judging him for having a messy kitchen. Not that the man hadn't already seen his kitchen in all different states, but it was the principle of the matter.

A little while later, as Will was sitting at his work table and staring intently at his latest lure, he heard the sound of tires of gravel. He didn't bother to get up, though, since he knew Hannibal wouldn't have any trouble finding his own way inside, and Will didn't want to let go of his lure until he'd finished at least a few more loops on it. Otherwise, it might fall apart, and all the time he'd already spent on it would have just been wasted.

The dogs all rushed to the front door when it opened, and Will grinned to himself as he pictured the look on Hannibal's face at getting swarmed by dogs. Though it wasn't as amusing as it had been in the beginning, because Hannibal no longer looked overwhelmed and disgusted by Will's pets. These days, he always looked almost fond of them, as if they were the only animals who had succeeded in winning over his heart. And Will hated the way his own heart started beating faster at the mere thought that Hannibal actually got along with his dogs, and enjoyed doing it.

Hannibal spent a decent amount of time greeting the dogs before making his way towards the living room, and Will only spared less than a second to glance over at his visitor before looking back at his work. "Hey."

"Good evening, Will. It is a pleasure to see you, as always. I will go get set up in the kitchen. Do you know how much longer it will take you to work on that? I was hoping to show you a few things in the kitchen, but it's perfectly alright if you'd prefer to continue with what you're doing."

The tone of Hannibal's voice said that it wasn't perfectly alright for Will to do something tantamount to ignoring him. It was tempting to say he'd need a while longer to work, but then

he decided that he was in a generous mood at the moment, so he'd oblige Hannibal for now. "You can go get things started. I'll be there in about ten minutes or so."

Hannibal nodded, and headed towards the kitchen. Will rolled his eyes, and stuck his tongue out just a bit as he peered through the magnifying glass to make sure that every detail came together perfectly. When he got to a reasonable point, he clipped his work to stop it from unraveling, and then got up and headed into the bathroom to quickly wash his hands before joining Hannibal in the kitchen.

Hannibal seemed pleased to see Will there. "Would you mind chopping these vegetables?"

"Is that all you wanted to show me? I've chopped vegetables before."

Hannibal shook his head. "I never said that what I wish to share with you has anything to do with the food."

Will sighed as he pulled out a knife and cutting board. "It better not be any more jewelry. I can only have so much of me covered in invisible bling before people start wondering why I jingle all the time when I walk." His eyes widened, and he paused with the knife in the middle of a tomato to turn and look at Hannibal. "How am I ever supposed to pass through a metal detector again? What if I'm needed in court, or we need to catch a plane to check out a crime scene?"

Hannibal just chuckled, the damn bastard. "You will not have any issues with those checkpoints. The same properties that prevent the ring from being visibly detected also prevent it from being detected by any other means. You are fine, Will. I would not give you anything that would have such extreme consequences."

Will closed his eyes for a moment as his shoulders slumped down in relief. "Oh, alright. I guess I can just trust everything you say, so now I know that this is no big deal."

Despite the heavy sarcasm in his voice, Hannibal seemed content to take his words at face value. "Indeed. Though if nothing else, I believe that you can at least trust that I enjoy spending time with you too much to risk that coming to an end over your anger."

"I find that difficult to believe," Will said after letting out a little snort. "Considering how much you've already done to piss me off even in just the past few months."

Hannibal shrugged. "All's well that ends well."

Will wasn't really sure that that saying fit in with the situation, but he decided to just let Hannibal have this one. "Right." He resumed chopping vegetables, and listened to Hannibal hum some classical piece softly as he moved around the kitchen. It wasn't until he was washing off the cutting board that he remembered the radio report from earlier. "Oh, by the way, I think I have someone for you."

Hannibal seemed to perk up at the thought of getting to kill and cook someone, but then his interest seemed to wane almost immediately, and it was one of the weirdest things Will had

ever seen. “Had I forgotten to mention it earlier?” he asked in one of those tones that was so casual it was obviously not casual. “I have decided to take a break from killing.”

Will blinked a few times, and then slowly turned to look at Hannibal in disbelief. “You want to willingly stop killing people?”

Hannibal shrugged. “I am a very long-lived being, Will. Surely it must have occurred to you at some point that I would grow bored of almost anything that entertains me at any given time. Of course, if you truly wish for me to kill this person, I will without any hesitation, but I believe it was you who did not want me killing at all, and considered the deaths being your choice to be doing the best you could with a situation you did not like.”

Now Will felt stuck. Hannibal was right about why Will had demanded to choose Hannibal’s victims, but he’d gotten so used to it, and to everything else about Hannibal, that it seemed weirder to not continue on the same as before. And if the woman from the radio was really such an awful person, then didn’t she deserve-? But no, because Will wasn’t supposed to be able to play god the way that Hannibal loved to do.

Or used to love to do, anyways. What the hell had made him suddenly change his mind about one of the things that had always seemed to be such an innate Hannibal trait? And how could Will ask Hannibal to go back to killing people if there was actually an opportunity to put an end to it?

But there was something else about what Hannibal had said that bothered Will. If Hannibal was going to eventually grow bored of anything that he enjoyed at some point, then didn’t that mean he would eventually grow bored of Will, too? Hadn’t that been a possibility he’d just been thinking about earlier today? But hearing it straight from Hannibal’s mouth somehow felt much, much worse. In fact, it would probably be less painful to be gutted with a hunting knife, and what the hell did that say about Will and his relationship with Hannibal?

Will bit his lip and wished that there were still more vegetables left to cut up, just so that he would have something to do with his hands. It was tempting to just kick Hannibal out right now so that he could wallow in his grief by himself, but he also had known from the beginning that Hannibal’s interest in him would eventually fade away, so he couldn’t act like a jilted lover just because of that.

Unfortunately, Hannibal had always been too good at reading Will. “What is wrong? Would you prefer me to take up my knife towards more pigs?”

Will shook his head. “No, of course not.” He could only hope that he actually sounded convincing when he said that. “I just…” he trailed off, unsure of how to actually explain himself. He’d been the one resisting Hannibal from the beginning. He’d wanted Hannibal to back off. But now… maybe what he’d said in careless parting words before was more true than he ever wanted to admit. But now it didn’t even matter, because he had confirmation that Hannibal didn’t actually want to be with Will forever. In fact, Will suspected that the moment he confessed his love to Hannibal in all seriousness, that’s the moment he would cease to be interesting, and Hannibal would leave him. Well, there was an easy solution to that, wasn’t there? Just never tell Hannibal how he felt, and hope that that would be enough. Hope that earning more time with the devil wouldn’t make it hurt even worse when things finally ended

between them. Will was a strong man, and he wasn't going to let this be where he broke down. "I'm glad that you don't want to kill anymore. Maybe not every criminal will get their due justice from the system, but I do believe that vigilante justice isn't very helpful overall." He reached out to squeeze Hannibal's upper arm. "I just thought of a new pattern, and I need to go add it to my lure before I forget. Let me know when dinner's ready, okay?"

Hannibal frowned, but he didn't try to push Will. "Very well. I hope it turns out well."

"Me too," Will muttered, just quietly enough that hopefully Hannibal wouldn't hear it. Then he rushed back to the living room, trying to convince himself that he wasn't just running away.

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Carmen jumped up in alarm when the kitchen door burst open, and her jaw dropped open in shock, which caused her cigarette to flutter to the floor. "You!" she gasped out.

The stranger looked much angrier than he had the last time she'd seen him. "Yes, yes, I'm back, you're terrified, blah, blah, blah. Do you even begin to realize how utterly useless you've been? Graham never sent Hannibal after you like I'd hoped. Maybe I just wasn't thinking big enough. But no matter what mistakes I've made, leaving you alive is not going to be one of them." He tilted his head almost thoughtfully. "And don't worry. This is going to hurt. A lot."

Carmen screamed, but no one came to help. They never did.

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